



James Macdonald

May 14, 2021

James Bristol Macdonald

March 31, 1952 - May 14, 2021

Jim slipped away suddenly in his 69th year leaving his family and friends heartbroken. Jim's life force had always been exuberant, hard to ignore.

Much loved by his partner of 40 years Sue Fisher, he was devoted to her and to her family and he really showed his loyalty and compassion over the last few years when she needed his care. He looked after the people that were close to him.

His parents A.A. (Bill) Macdonald and Joy Macdonald loved and supported him unconditionally as he started leading an adventurous life at an early age. His love of speed earned him the nickname, "Toad of Toad Hall", after the Wind in the Willows character. Anything that moved exerted a magnetic appeal: bicycles, cars, motorcycles, sailboats, skis. He loved going fast and was a fearless risk taker, a racer at heart, the ultimate wheelman. His unforgettable smile reflected these passions.

Much loved by his older sister Sheila and his younger brother Jock, they spent summers together at the cabin on Lake Wah Wash Kesh. With Griff the family

dog as their masthead, they explored the lake in the family sailboat. Jim was a natural and fearless sailor. No wind was too big to tackle. Those early sailing days were always memorable. Once Jock's son Iain was born, the three Macdonald siblings ritualized an annual week together at the cottage. The goal was to imbue Iain with the Macdonald spirit by including him in ongoing family adventures. Jim and Iain established a special bond during those years.

Early school days for Jim were spent at Upper Canada College and then Lawrence Park Collegiate for high school. After finishing school he helped his father start and operate a new company, LabelPlans then took a course in operating heavy equipment which changed the course of his life. He started his career in the NWT where Jock was living and eventually moved to Alberta where he honed his craft as a crane operator, a job he loved and became very good at. Jim and Sue lived in Edmonton for a number of years before returning to Toronto where he continued his career - a career perfectly tailored to his love of dangerous and challenging work. His skills became legendary in the world of cranes.

When he retired at 60 he started going to the Mosport Racetrack where amateur drivers could practise their skills on a real racetrack. He took up boxing, a sport he loved. But no matter what was going on in his life he would head north with Sue as soon as the ice disappeared from the Lake. They would stay there until the black flies arrived. Once the summer was over they would go north again and stay until freeze up. Jim always found lots of time to read at the cabin. He was a voracious reader. His love of the north was also profound – an affinity he shared with his father to whom he bore an uncanny physical resemblance.

Since the Macdonald family has a long tradition of planting trees, planting a tree in Jim's memory would be a very meaningful tribute.

Tribute Wall

MC

“ OMJ: Friends, I just found this while searching Candace Phippen, What can I say now, since 1974 last meet -up; he loved and was loved.

Maggi

margaret Cantwell - March 25, 2023 at 11:22 PM

HB

“ Jim Macdonald was one of my husband’s closest friends, one of those friends you can be yourself with —wherever and whenever you are with them. But Jim was one of those people I would say who always made others feel comfortable. Ian first met Jim at Lawrence Park Collegiate. They quickly found they had lots in common and after finishing highschool moved into a house together in Cabbagetown. Music, machines, building things, art, reading, and family were some of the interests they shared. When I met and married Ian a few short years later, Jim was one of his ushers. He was a quiet, calm addition to the wedding party -- a true gentleman. My sisters soon became fond of him and so did I. And when our first child was born we asked Jim to be godfather.

There was a strong connection with Jim always though we didn’t see a lot of him over the years. There were phone calls from time to time and he’d show up for special birthdays. Or we’d call when we were coming to the city and arrange lunch or a drink. One time we ran into Jim and his wife Susan unexpectedly en route to a family birthday dinner at a restaurant on Queen Street. Coincidentally, our son Ross, Jim’s godson, had rented a house on the same street as Jim and Susan, not knowing Jim was living just a few houses away.

We saw Jim more often in Collingwood. He’d come for an overnight. Sometimes in his jazzy new car, sometimes on his motor bike. Just before COvid he came up for a reunion with mutual friends dating back to school days. The pictures from that visit show a happy, healthy-looking Jim, beaming from ear to ear. We talked about books, as always. And whatever we were each going through at the time — joint replacements, heart issues, work or retirement and family.

Jim was an honest and loyal friend. He was a curious, thoughtful, modest person who did not judge others. The Birchall family will miss him very much.

Heather Birchall - August 23, 2021 at 12:59 PM

WQ

“ I just found this after much searching. I am heartbroken. I was Jim's boxing coach and friend for the last 5 years. He was coolest and nicest man anyone could hope to meet. Nice overhand right too! I'll miss you forever Jim. Love you Brother.

William Quinteros - August 16, 2021 at 09:53 AM

CP

“ Jim, my husband Pat Phippen, and dear friend Ian Birchall met in high school. We all have so many memories and experiences with and about Jim.

My memories are not as long as Pat's and Ian's, but I'll start in the mid 1970s. Jim traveled to our wedding in San Jose, California in 1975 by motorcycle. We all stayed for a while (months) at my parents' home. One of my favorite memories is Jim installing a sprinkler system in my parents' yard for room and board. The system never did work, but Jim put his heart and soul into the project. We all laughed at the time and laughed 43 years later remembering. Jim, Pat and Ian helped my Dad and Mom on a number of other projects as well, each with its own story

Jim and Susan stayed with Pat and me for awhile in Calgary. Jim and I spent many a late night playing backgammon, sharing our love of books and comics. When my daughter was born, Jim gave her books from his childhood which we still have and cherish.

Our meeting place over the years was always graciously hosted by Ian and Heather Birchall in Collingwood. We took my mother on a trip to see Niagara Falls in 2018 and one of our stops after the Falls was Collingwood. Jim surprised my mother by being there as well. A great reunion 43 years after their first meeting!

A good friend. A radiant smile. Compassionate and caring. We miss you Jim. Always will.

Our deepest condolences.



Candace Phippen - August 14, 2021 at 08:20 PM

CH

“ I will think of you always

charmaine hine - July 24, 2021 at 06:31 PM

CA

“ I worked around Jim a lot as a first year oiler. He was as smooth and fast as they come at hoisting steel. He mentored me a lot at Iroquois Park and Detour Lake before his retirement. The picture is of the smelter at Detour lake with Jim's 80ton on the left. Jim set the first steel column on that job with a 170ton AT provided from detour lake. There is a plaque on that piece of iron acknowledging the refurb of the mine and his name will forever be apart of that. Rest In Peace Jim, my deepest condolences to his family and friends.



Conley Arbour - July 16, 2021 at 01:42 PM

JA

“ I met jimmy mac as a first year crane apprentice. I fueled his crane and cleaned his windows. When i was done he offered me the seat to see what i thought. That was a long time ago but i will never forget that day!! We shared lots of stories and laughs over the years. Your name and legacy will be passed on through me for as long as i'm around! My heartfelt wishes to your family!

James Allen

Mt.Moriah

NL

James Allen - July 16, 2021 at 10:34 AM

SG

“ Our immediate neighbour for over 20 years, Jim was part of the family. We shared a wall, a garden, a roof, a love of really good wine, a deep yearning for the north, a tree. We did neighbourly things for each other, shoveled sidewalks, took out garbage, weeded gardens. What went beyond that were a few things: his love of our little dog Blue. Jim and Blue had a very special relationship - Blue would rush out to meet Jim when he pulled up or came home. Jim would actually have to sneak into his house if he didn't have time to say hi, as Blue would smell and hear Jim each time. When we moved away for a year, Jim had missed Blue so much he said we'd taken "his" dog away. Blue missed Jim as much, I know.

Jim was salt of the earth, a man with integrity, someone I admire for forging his own path, a true gentleman and a man whose spirit will be greatly missed.

My heart goes out to his siblings, nieces and nephews and other family. I wish we'd had a chance to meet. Lastly, we are still next door, and will continue to support Susan in any way we can.

I share the picture below from the day our shared tree was planted. Look at how proud both Jim and Blue are.

Peace.



Susanne Gossage - July 15, 2021 at 11:31 AM

ST

“ Jim was a terrific across-the-street neighbour and friend for over 20 years. He and Sue rented our driveway (and were always ready to lend the car!) so there were many sidewalk chats about our houses, our gardens, our shared love of good wine and much more. Jim was one of the good guys - warm, intelligent and generous. He will be missed by us and by many other Winnifred Avenue neighbours.
Peace, Jim.
- Stewart & Marcio

Stewart - July 11, 2021 at 11:14 AM

KM

“ "I hope your sails are up and full of the winds of Heaven" my dear friend. This man was one of the best; kind, caring, honorable, trustworthy, and generous to name a few of his many gifts to us. James B and I had been friends for 50 years plus (outstanding) and he continually marveled at this. The world is not the same place without our special boy. Karen.

Karen Mealey - July 10, 2021 at 01:23 AM

EH

“ To Sheila, Jock, Iain and Sue,
Our love and condolences.
To Jim, a fellow adventurer and rigger. We'll miss him!
Hugh and Erica

Erica and Hugh - June 25, 2021 at 09:53 PM